

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH COLONEL WAYNE GRIGSBY, COMMANDER,
3RD HEAVY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION, MULTINATIONAL DIVISION-
CENTRAL, VIA TELECONFERENCE FROM IRAQ TIME: 10:15 A.M. EST DATE: THURSDAY,
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CHARLES "JACK" HOLT (chief, New Media Operations, OASD PA): And with
us on the bloggers roundtable this morning is Colonel Wayne Grigsby. He's the
commander of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division in MND
Central.

Sir, good morning, and thank you for joining us.

COL. GRIGSBY: Good morning. Thank you for having me today. Look
forward to it.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Do you have an opening statement for us?

COL. GRIGSBY: Yes, sir, I do. You'd like me to read the opening
statement and then take some questions? MR. HOLT: Yes, sir, if you would.

COL. GRIGSBY: Okay. Got it.

Okay. Good morning, gentlemen, and thank you for taking the time to
participate in this discussion. I have a brief opening statement and then I can
take some questions -- (inaudible).

I am Colonel Wayne W. Grigsby, Jr., commander of the 3rd Heavy Brigade
Combat Team, part of the 3rd Infantry Division. We are part of in Multi-
national Division Center at Task Force Marne under the command of Major General
Rick Lynch.

We deployed to Iraq in the middle of March 2007 as the third of five
surge brigades to block the flow of (accelerants ?) into Baghdad. The area we
assumed responsibility of is called the Medine Kada (ph), a portion of the
Baghdad province. Our operational environment is approximately the size of the
Washington, D.C. Beltway region and adjacent to Baghdad on its eastern boundary
along the Diyala and Tigris Rivers. Our battle space is filled by a mix of
Shi'a, 70 percent, and Sunni, 30 percent, citizens, and is primarily agrarian
farmland. Some of the major population centers in our area are Salman Pak,
Diyala, Narawhan and Nahada (sp). Approximately 1.2 million people live in the
Medine Kada (ph).

Prior to our arrival, one or two armored convoys had responsibility for this area. They lived and worked out of a base in Baghdad west of the Diyala River. While these soldiers did a great job, as soldiers answering the call always do, we brought many more soldiers to attack the task of walking the -- (inaudible) -- into Baghdad and providing a more stable environment for the good citizens of the Medine Kada (ph) by coming at the insurgents from a different direction -- by actually living out in the kada. Our brigade totals more than -- (inaudible) -- and we have forces working out of one forward operating base -- (inaudible) -- Hammer -- two patrol bases and four combat outposts and three joint security sites, all in major population centers in our area of operation.

In June, the fifth of five surge brigades, my sister brigade -- (7th ?) Brigade of the 3rd ID -- deployed and assumed responsibility for the Arab-Jabor region south of Baghdad, along our western boundary across the Tigris River. Upon their moving into Multi-national Division battle space, we initiated the first of many offenses of Operation Marne Torch. Following Marne Torch, we conducted Operation Marne Husky, then Marne Avalanche, and then Marne Torch II. These sustained offensive operations synchronized pressure on the insurgent elements and matched the resources of the Multi-national Division Center to eliminate the insurgent and terrorist sanctuaries within the center's area of operations.

One of our excellent battalions, the Battalion 269 Armored Regiment, a combined arms battalion, is detached from the brigade and working under the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division in the Caradon (sp) district of Baghdad. Initially our field artillery battalion was detached as well, conducting detainee security operations at Camp Bucca, Iraq, at the outset of our deployment. In October we welcomed back the 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery back to our brigade. One-Ten Field Artillery is one of our battalions out of Fort Benning, Georgia, but they conducted detainee operations at Camp Bucca, Iraq, for the first six months of our deployment. With them back in the fold, we were able to focus greater combat power and combat multipliers in the northern portion of our battle space. Just as we were able to positively shape operations in Baghdad as part of the surge, One-Ten became the main effort for Operation Marne Anvil and allowed us to surge in an area that was previously held by extremists, meaning it was an extremist sanctuary.

Through the Marne summer offenses and Operation Marne Anvil, we killed 128 insurgents, detained almost 500 suspected insurgents, 25 of which were high-value individuals -- just one caught last night. We have found and cleared 119 IEDs, seized 43 caches, destroyed 160 boats, cleared 2,785 buildings and searched more than 11,000 vehicles. Been busy.

Now, almost six months after deployment -- (inaudible) -- of the surge, I believe we have achieved some momentum in the Medine Kada (ph). Although it is not yet irreversible momentum, this positive momentum has set the conditions for political accommodation, economic development and essential services to progress, and we are beginning to see some signs of normalcy returning to the way of life in our battle space.

We still have an enemy out there that wants to kill us and continue to disrupt the lives of the good citizens of the Medine Kada (ph). We continue to work in partnership with the Iraqi police in our kada, and we constantly communicate on the happenings in our area of operations. We look at all reported homicides and kidnappings reported to the six Iraqi police stations in our area of operations over the last 12 months, and have found a distinct downward trend in both. After a high of 35 murders in May, we have now

experienced two straight months of only eight. Barring a drastic increase during this month, the yearly totals will be lower than the crime levels of 2005, prior to the Golden Dome Mosque bombing in Samarra. There were 355 murders in the kada in 2005, and 631 in 2006. And to date we've recorded about 232 this year, so that shows that the violence is going down and people are getting along, and we're working well together.

As you can imagine, with our additional combat power and our placement in key population centers, we are well prepared to eliminate enemy sanctuaries close to Baghdad that could be used by insurgents and terrorists who adversely affect the Iraqi capital's security situation.

From my vantage point here east of Baghdad, the surge was the right tactical decision at the right time, and the Sledgehammer Brigade was put in the exact right spot, and we're continuing to kick the insurgents' butt each day. Our success cannot be attributed solely to lethal operations with the application of greater amounts of combat power. We attack the problems in the Medine Kada (ph) from day one along all five lines of operation. We have applied pressure on the extremists along all five lines of operation on a daily basis -- that being security, governance, economics, transition and information. The solutions to the problems in the Medine Kada (ph) requires more than just additional boots on the ground or the application of greater amounts of combat power. It requires the application of counterinsurgent doctrinal fundamentals and diverse areas of expertise. It requires projecting Army units and American soldiers out of large forward operating bases and into population centers like we are now.

We do not drive or commute to work. We live in the towns. We work with the people. We are here to help -- to help, and we walk to work. By doing this, immediately upon our arrival we were able to develop a strong relationship with governmental, Iraqi Security Force and tribal leaders and catch insurgents off-balance. Our efforts to assist the government and spark the economy, along with our constant pressure, have demonstrated to the population and its key leaders that we are trustworthy and committed to the cause of stabilizing the communities we work in, and that we are here to help them, support and assist.

At the outset we applied doctrinal counterinsurgency fundamentals. It is my belief that has been the key to our success. In January-February '06, the issue of the military review contained an article by General David Petraeus, "Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq," in which it outlines 14 observations. I'd like to highlight four just to show you what we've been doing in the Sledgehammer Brigade.

Money as an ammunition: Money as an ammunition in some instances can be more important than actual bullets and bombs -- true believer. The Commanders Emergency Reconstruction Program enables units on the ground to complete numerous small projects of enormous importance to local citizens -- quick wins, up front. We have spent \$24.3 million, 53 percent of which has been dedicated to water purification and distribution in this agrarian portion of the Medine Kada (ph). While the baseline number may seem large, I submit to you that every penny is well spent because it results in the good people of Iraq seeing tangible benefits to their cooperation with coalition forces and Iraqi security forces as the money sparks the economy and brings back essential services. Intelligence is the key to success -- true believer. The Sledgehammer Brigade conducts nothing but aggressive, intel-driven combat ops. Detailed actual intel flows allows us to conduct precise operations instead of invasive sweeps of large population centers. When we put out a focus on someone, we know it is a

destabilizing element. They do not remain on the street long. We get them. Due to intel sharing amongst VCTs throughout Iraq theater of operations, we have been able to increase our operational reach. Five of our HVIs were detained by other VCTs after they fled our area of operation. That's just coordination with the brigade commanders -- and all of us, back in '83 and '84, were going to the Infantry Officer Basics Course, so we all know each other. It's a great Army. Not only have we eliminated sanctuaries but through intelligence sharing and cross talk we have denied insurgents the ability to camouflage themselves in the population.

Ultimate success depends on local leaders -- right-o. I'm sure that you have heard of concerned citizens as they help us thicken the lines of our security ops. Local leaders are directing the men in their towns and villages and taking up positions against the enemy -- our common enemy. This is attempting to keep the good people of Iraq in an ever-degrading violent -- in an ever-degrading violent environment to further their own aims. As a result of the efforts of these brave citizens, we are seeing stability in parts of the Medine Kada (ph) that most people would have thought impossible just a few months ago. These concerned citizens -- and I can take your questions on this one when I'm finished, but this is probably the biggest piece that I've seen that has allowed us to do things out here that we weren't able to do in the past.

And recently we have had 24 sheikhs, the Kada emir, the Kada Council chairman and the Iraqi police chief and two national police brigade commanders here on -- (inaudible) -- hammer to discuss the way head for security and the role the concerned citizen will play. Local leaders are stepping up, and concerned citizen has been a great success. We must continue the program and not put any artificial, arbitrary limitations upon it.

And finally, there is no substitute for flexible, adaptable and tough leaders. We all know in the Army, leaders make it happen -- in this fight, the junior leaders. It is the -- it's not Grigsby. It's the junior leaders: the sergeant, the staff sergeant, the young lieutenant and the platoon sergeant. The key to our success in Iraq has been leaders, especially young leaders, who have risen to the occasion and taken on tasks for which they've had little or no training. Our young captains, lieutenants and sergeants are innovative and tough. They consistently amaze me with their efforts, and it's humbling to be afforded the opportunity to command such excellent young men and women.

I have been here before and have been through the training to prepare for this current deployment. When I leave this time, I've been here for 37 months. Our Army has done a tremendous job in cultivating these traits by capturing lessons learned and integrating them into tough -- (inaudible) -- training at our training centers.

And finally, 25 sledgehammer soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice since 4 April, and 148 have sustained injuries in combat, and I just want to thank upfront, as I always do, the families of our fallen sledgehammer heroes and those soldiers recovering from injuries for their sacrifice to our freedom. I want to remind those families and soldiers that we will never forget their sons and daughters, and we will always support them in any way possible.

And gentlemen, that concludes the little opening statement there, and I'll feel free to take your questions.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Thank you very much.

And Jared Fishman with (The Air Force Man ?), you were first online. Why don't you get us started?

Q Yes, sir. Thank you for your time. And if there's a way we could get that presentation -- the PowerPoint slides you were relying on, that would be great, too, if you could get those to Mr. Holt down the line.

My question is --

COL. GRIGSBY: I memorized that. I memorized that. I didn't read that.

Q If there's a way maybe you could discuss a little bit -- aside from the statistics, some of the feeling on the ground. Obviously we're seeing a lot of the -- even the mainstream press back here in the states and in England are reporting on the tremendous strides, but perhaps you could give us some of the flavor of what you're seeing with the Iraqis, both in the army and in the police and in the citizenry, the CLCs, that you're seeing in Medine Kada (ph).

COL. GRIGSBY: Well, just one example: This town north in Medine Kada, a place called Narawhan, just most recently -- and I think I mentioned it -- we established a combat outpost inside Narawhan -- right inside Narawhan -- adjacent to the Iraqi police station and the joint security site. And before that, you would not see people walking around, going to the market, kids, women -- you just -- the place was almost a ghost town. When you would drive through there, you would hardly see anything. Just the other day we had General Retired Barry McCaffrey, who I worked for in Desert Shield and Desert Storm over here -- we walked out of the patrol base, out of the (cot ?), down through the market. There must have been a hundred kids following us, women, men. We had a sheikh, a concerned citizen leader, that was walking beside General McCaffrey with the Iraqi media and Western media there. he was not afraid to be seen with coalition forces. He was walking with us and discussing the concerned citizens program. And just today -- you know, talking about the national police -- just today I went to one of many of these little junior leader programs that the Iraqi police is putting on and 10 local police just graduated from that local police academy and are heading back up to Narawhan to provide the security for the town of Narawhan.

And that's just one instance in Narawhan -- one town. I would tell you that's happening in all the towns.

When we first got here -- the way I know this is -- the way this works is the Medine Kada (ph) before -- there's maybe one or two -- (inaudible) -- that came out every other day, every third day, across the bridge into the Medine Kada (ph). As they crossed the bridge, all the extremists would call their cell phones, tell everybody to put their stupid stuff down and wave at them.

So when we first came over and we started planting ourselves in, you wouldn't see many people because they didn't know if we'd be here, they didn't know to trust us, and basically the extremists were still intimidating and the people were reconning us. About two months into it, they really came at us. We put them down. about three or four months into it, now, they're out; the economy is growing, there's more shops, there's more stuff in the shops. We've captured over 500 insurgents -- a lot of them from local-national tips where the concerned citizens or a local-national walks up to the forward operating base

and says, "Hey, that guy over there has never been in this town before. He drove in with two big trucks, a tarp over top of it. I don't think it's right, and we don't want him in here if he's going to bring trouble. Can you go take care of that problem?" And those things are happening on a daily basis now.

So there's your differences. I hope that answers your question.

MR. HOLT: And, Andrew.

Q Thanks. Hey, Jared, you got any follow-ups or can I go?

Q Go ahead.

Q Great, thanks. Colonel, Andrew Lubin from the Military Observer. Appreciate you taking the time to talk with us, sir.

I've got a couple questions, if you don't mind.

COL. GRIGSBY: Go ahead.

Q We were talking back in end of September with Lieutenant Colonel Ken Agee down in your area, and the PRTs were just coming on board the following -- how are your PRTs doing now?

COL. GRIGSBY: Well, Ken Agee doesn't work for me, but I've known him for about -- Q Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were down in -- you mentioned Arab-Jabor. I knew he was right -- I thought he was in your --

COL. GRIGSBY: Yeah, he's across -- he's in 2nd Brigade, 3rd ID. He's across the river from me.

Q Oh, okay. Great.

COL. GRIGSBY: But I got an EPRT the same time he did.

Q Okay.

COL. GRIGSBY: He didn't have an EPRT when we first got here, so at the National Training Center we trained and we built our own NPRT and I put the deputy commander in charge of governance and economics, my VSTB commander in charge of economics, and all the brigade staff officers filled all the slots, and we started from day one working on governance and economics. And that has built a sound base.

But around that same time, we received Mr. George White, a State Department rep; we received a USAID rep. We just received our Agriculture rep last night, and it's helped us tremendously. I mean, we're going to take this bad boy to the next level. We just -- I just received his brief after being here for about 30 days where he has showed me what we're going to do for the next year and to synchronize some from the great things we already started. And now Mr. White, who is a subject matter expert -- not like us, just trying to make it happen -- he's a subject matter expert, so he can switch us and -- in the right direction so we can make things happen. He goes to all of the Kada meetings once a week with the Kada Marne and the -- (inaudible) -- directors. He's fully involved. He's out doing combat patrols. He goes out and surveys the markets to see which ones are ready to go, which ones need some micro loans, which one needs some micro grants. And he's working at the brick factory and a

couple big business sites as well, so that is the guy that we really need. And it's really at the right time because security is done to the level right now where we can really continue to apply pressure to the extremists by increasing in economy and governance. And these guys are doing a good job.

I'd like more, though. See, they've got about 112 of these guys in the Baghdad PRT for one. I have three at the Medine Kada (ph). I'd love to get some more EPRT and get some more of these guys out in our EPRT to make it a little bit more robust, and I'm working that through my chain of command. But it's definitely working.

Q Great. Can you talk just a bit more about what they're doing? You mentioned micro loans; you mentioned the brick factory. Are you able to be a bit more specific?

COL. GRIGSBY: Yes, sir, I am. Along the economic line of operations, for example, Mr. White, who is an economist, is a subject matter expert. He goes out and looks at different markets, and he can actually tell you on which shelves, if you've got this product to market it at a different level or that -- you know, where you could help them in this way or you could help them that way.

So we have this think called micro grants, which is between \$2,500 and \$10,000, where we put them through a school to validate them. We accept them, and then we give them \$2,500 and they start their business or they just restock their shelves. And then we come back and check and make sure they're using the money in an appropriate manner. That is a grant and that gets them kick-started, and he identifies those.

And then the markets that may be a little bit better, he'll work the micro loan piece, which is a little bit more responsible and maybe a little bit more money, but that guy has to pay it back. So you can see, that starts the banking system within the Medine Kada (ph). And he's the subject matter expert on that.

We have a lot of state-owned businesses here that he's embraced and he's trying to get working. For one -- one example is something called the brick factory. It's up east of Narawhan. And he's identified up there that that brick factory really needs some generator power and black oil to get it going. Right now it employs about 2,000 people, and in Narawhan, there's 100,000-man population. And if you figure -- that's 100,000 total. With 10 people in a family, there is 10,000 jobs that could be given in the brick factory to employ the majority of Narawhan, and we know that could be an issue -- just getting them jobs gets them off the street from doing stupid stuff or going with the extremists.

Q Oh, exactly. That's the same thing -- that's how they brought back Anwar. They basically get them working, get them off the streets.

COL. GRIGSBY: Right. That's the subject matter expertise that he brings.

Q Great. When you get a chance, would it be possible to get him on the phone for you? Because we've talked to a lot of PRTs but nobody on your radio. That would be great, talking to them, you know.

COL. GRIGSBY: Okay.

MR. HOLT: All right, Andrew. We'll be --

COL. GRIGSBY: At one of these next -- next one of these, I'll get him out there.

Q Thank you. Colonel, also to follow up, when I was out last year -- last winter at Mamadai (ph) with 10th Mountain, 215, they had a major -- (inaudible) -- who basically turned the population -- (inaudible) -- from 80-20 Sunni-Shi'a to your 70-30 Shi'a-Sunni. Is that still continuing or what -- you know, is (jam ?) still rolling out of the cities -- (inaudible) -- or are you blocking it off now?

COL. GRIGSBY: All's I can tell you is what's happening in my area of operation. And there is a combination of Sunni extremists, Shi'a extremists and Persian influence in A/O Hammer.

The Sunni extremists, as we've done very, very well with -- Narawhan was Shi'a extremist -- excuse me. And now -- we went in there and we killed or captured six or seven key leaders, and we have intel reports that say that the Shi'a extremists that are up there no longer want to be part of the organization. The Shi'a extremist office up there no longer wants to stay there because the people don't accept it, the coalition forces are up there, et cetera. So that's a good example. That didn't happen before in Narawhan, Jisr Diyala or al-Wahada.

Along the river on the west, we had the Sunni extremists that were continuing the battle, and that's working very well as well. Just today, with concerned citizens and the Iraqi security forces and the battalion 115 Infantry from the Hammer Brigade -- (inaudible) -- Sunrise II, which was a clearing operation just north of Salman Pak. Our focus for the next five to six months is to get in clear and control Salman Pak because we think that's the last pocket of extremism -- Sunni extremism within the Medine Kada (ph). And just north of that, we're in the process of now clearing and establishing concerned citizens checkpoints so the extremists can't come back, and that will apply pressure on Salman Pak.

In reference to the Persian influence, early on we captured something like 36 rockets -- 107 mm -- that were pointed directly at Hammer. One of my UAV operators -- a sergeant was conducting his morning fly-around looking for any unusual things and he identified it, peered in, and there was 36 rockets on launchers pointed at FOB Hammer that would have been terrible if they would have gone off and killed us and fired at us. And what we did is we went up there and of course dismantled them, had the fingerprints, put it in the intel system. That drove us back into Narawhan to capture our HVI number one at that point, a guy named Hadir Yunis (ph) -- who, by the way, in his house he had the videotape, the CD of putting all that stuff together and et cetera. So we got some good intel from them. We continue to use that, and that helps us with the Persian influence with the rockets.

And also the EFPs have increased a little bit in the Medine Kada (ph). We haven't seen some of them in quite a while, but we were up to about 15, and as you know that's another indicator of Persian influence as well.

So all three -- we got all three out here in the Medine Kada (ph), but we seem to be working them all pretty good. Q Okay, great. Jared, or can I continue?

Q Go ahead.

Q Okay, thanks.

Colonel, can you talk a bit more about the concerned citizen groups? A lot of the other general officers we've talked to have been concerned that the Sunnis who are trying to get involved are being stonewalled by the -- (inaudible) -- by the local Shi'as. Are you running into that or are they getting along pretty well?

COL. GRIGSBY: In the -- again in the Hammer Brigade's area of operation, we've got almost 4,000 concerned citizens -- a little bit over 4,000. It's about a 50-50 mix of Sunni and Shi'a, and in some concerned citizens groups -- the one up in this place called Kardaliya (ph), it's Sunni and Shi'a working together as one team.

Q Okay, great.

COL. GRIGSBY: Like I said, I had 24 sheikhs -- for the first time -- I've been trying to get this and about eight months into it, just a couple weeks ago, I had 24 sheikhs -- the leaders, the sheikh leaders of the Medine Kada (ph) -- up here at Hammer with the Iraqi security forces, with the civil leadership and coalition forces. Sunni and Shi'a, all concerned about people not doing bad things to the people of the Medine Kada (ph). So it seems to be working well up here in the Medine Kada (ph).

Q Great. Are you paying them, or how are these people funded now? Is it GOI paying them?

COL. GRIGSBY: Right now, what we do is we do CERP projects. For example, they put in for a security contract which enables them to secure their neighborhood. We look at it, we approve it, and we pay them for 90 days at 30 day increments, and then every 90 days that contract goes up for a re-look. And there's certain metrics that they have to be able to show us that they're doing stuff before we'll redo the contract. So it's currently still being paid by coalition.

Q Okay, great. Are you getting GOI assistance? Are they involved in your A/O at all, or how --

COL. GRIGSBY: They're -- yes. It's getting better. Put it this way: Just about a week ago we were up with Colonel Retired Ollie North and Major General Lynch at this place called Patrol Base Assassin, and Colonel Ahmadi (sp), the Three-One National Police Iraqi Security Force commander stated that the concerned citizens will eventually become part of the Iraqi police or the national police or the Iraqi army. So that's the way they'll get them into the Iraqi security forces. So that's what we're seeing. We're seeing GOI putting their hands on it and they're going to take them into the Iraqi police, national police or the Iraqi army. Q Okay, great. Thank you very much.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir.

Well, we're just about out of time here, sir. Do you have any closing statements, closing thoughts for us?

COL. GRIGSBY: I would just tell you in the Medine Kada (ph), before we got here, before the surge, Sunni extremists, Shi'a extremists and Persian

influence were doing what they wanted to do out there. They no longer can do that. And it's just evident that the surge was the right thing to do because inside Baghdad just a couple of days ago they had two attacks -- two. That's unheard of. And we're at the front door checking ID cards of any of the bad guys or accelerants that are going into Baghdad.

So the soldiers of the Hammer Brigade in conjunction with the Iraqi security forces and the concerned citizens and the good people of Iraq have done what we were tasked to do, is to block accelerants from getting into Baghdad. But it's come at a cost, and I can -- I just can't say enough thankful to the family members of the soldiers that we lost and the soldiers that are wounded. My heart will always -- during this time of the year especially -- will always go out to them, and they will always be part of the Sledgehammer Brigade Combat Team.

And thank you for having us today.

MR. HOLT: Thank you, sir. Thank you for joining us here at the bloggers roundtable.

Colonel Wayne Grigsby, the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team commander, 3rd Infantry Division, Multi National Division Center.

And merry Christmas to you, sir.

COL. GRIGSBY: Merry Christmas to you guys. Thanks.

MR. HOLT: Thank you, sir.

Q Colonel, thanks for the time. Appreciate it.

END.